



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Marketing and  
Regulatory  
Programs

Agricultural  
Marketing  
Service

P.O.Box 96456  
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## **NOTICE TO THE TRADE**

### **Fresh Fruits and Vegetables**

#### **Required Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices (GAP/GHP) Certification**

Several years ago the Agricultural Marketing Service began requiring that any plant supplying us with processed fruit and vegetable products to pass a Plant Survey performed by the Processed Products Branch. The Survey verifies compliance with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs). At that time there was no similar requirement for vendors of fresh products, as FDA had not yet developed comparable guidance for these commodities. FDA has since published the "Guide to Minimize Microbial Food Safety Hazards for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables," and we understand that several retailers are requiring evidence of compliance by their fresh fruit and vegetable suppliers. In addition, AMS' Fresh Products Branch, in cooperation with its State partners, has developed the "USDA Federal-State Audit Verification Program for Good Agricultural Practices and Good Handling Practices."

**Therefore, continuing our commitment to employ best practices in our commodity purchases, we plan to require federal or federal/state verification of adherence with the FDA GAP/GHP guidelines for all fresh products supplied to our program beginning October 1, 2003. Verifications will be based on the supplier's ability to score a minimum of seventy percent in each category for the entire system from field to receiving. GAP/GHP certification must be completed within twelve months prior to the award of the contract or no later than ten days after the award.**

For more information about the GAP/GHP Guidelines check [www.fpb.info@usda.gov](http://www.fpb.info@usda.gov) or, for information and/or GAP/GHP certification services, contact Kathy Staley on 1-800-811-2373.

Sincerely,

Susan Proden, Chief  
Commodity Procurement Branch  
Fruit and Vegetable Programs



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